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ART. 1.—*Present state of Oxford University.*

*Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners, appointed to inquire into the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford; together with the Evidence, and an Appendix.* London: 1852. 760 pages, folio.

It required no small degree of courage in Lord John Russell to move his Sovereign to command such an investigation as this; but he seems to have found seven men courageous and indefatigable enough to accomplish the work. We can only regret that a place in the board of investigation could not have been offered to Sir William Hamilton, the eminent professor of logic and metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, whose papers in the *Edinburgh Review*, twenty years ago, were so influential in summoning attention to the abuses existing in the English Universities. Those articles, lately embodied in his wonderfully diversified volume of learning, entitled "Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform," show that much of the laborious research of the seven commissioners had been already accomplished by the single-handed Scotch professor, and the greater part of their conclusions anticipated. That no trifling toil is demanded for such an



general question, with respect to the utility and worth of history. It certainly seems difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the lordly scorn or condescending pity, with which some in our own day treat historical studies, with the signal honour put upon this branch of knowledge, and this form of composition, in the very structure of the word of God. The only way in which the force of this consideration can be sensibly impaired, is by resorting to the obsolete idea, that the form of revelation is adapted to a less enlightened and intelligent condition of the race than that to which we have attained. Let those who can, be satisfied with this view of the case; but we, who believe in the Bible as a permanent revelation, not in substance only, but in form, and as exhibiting in both respects the wisdom of its Author, have certainly no need to be ashamed of any means or method of instruction, which has been so highly honoured and extensively made use of, by the Holy Ghost. While uninspired history must always be immeasurably lower, in authority and dignity, than that which is inspired, the historical form, which is common to both, is, by that community, exalted far above the praise or censure of the most fastidious critic, whether utilitarian or transcendental. History, as the world knows to its cost, may be false as well as true, and is not always admirably written; but the man who affects to despise history as such, only adds another to the endless illustrations of that apostolical paradox, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

In the next place, and as a specific application of the general idea just suggested, this extraordinary prominence of history in Scripture should lead us to appreciate the intrinsic value of that part of revelation, which is apt to be denied or underrated, even by believing readers, in their zeal for the devotional, practical, doctrinal, or prophetic elements, which likewise enter largely and essentially into the structure of a written revelation. A general pride of intellect, as well as a specific predilection and capacity for certain forms of truth and methods of instruction, may betray even sensible, well-meaning men, into this irreverent depreciation of a part of God's word, which his own divine authority and wisdom have made so remarkably extensive and conspicuous. The notion that the histories of

Scripture are only suited to awaken the attention of the youngest and least cultivated class of readers, but unworthy of the more mature and educated intellect, is far more prevalent than some imagine, and exerts a potent and pernicious influence on many minds, who are not conscious of its operation. The corrective of this evil is a full recognition of the intrinsic value and importance of this part of revelation, as attested by the very fact of its existence and its prominence in the canon of Scripture. However we may argue *a priori* in depreciation of even inspired history, as compared with more abstract or philosophical and systematic exhibitions of the same essential truth, the simple fact that it has pleased God to employ the first named method of instruction, in so large a portion of his written word, is alone sufficient to evince, not only that the method cannot be absurd and worthless in itself, but also that these parts of Scripture are no whit less authoritative or less useful than the rest, which many are disposed to place above them.

But besides this absolute intrinsic value of the Sacred History, entitling it to equal reverence and attention with the other Scriptures, there is also a relative importance which belongs to it and must not be neglected. There is, indeed, a mutual relation and connection between all the parts of revelation, even the most distant and dissimilar, which cannot be overlooked by the interpreter without distorting his views, not only of the several parts, but of the *tout ensemble*. Hence it follows, that some accurate acquaintance with each part of Scripture is an indispensable prerequisite to the thorough knowledge of every other, as well as to correct views of the whole, considered as a uniform and homogeneous system. Nor can any such acquaintance with the parts of Scripture and their mutual relations, how minute soever, be without its use in the interpretation of any one part, or of the whole Bible.

But what is thus true and important, as to all the distinguishable parts of Scripture, is pre-eminently true of those which are distinguished from the others as historical. In other words, while all the parts illustrate one another, a knowledge of this part is indispensably necessary to a correct appreciation of the rest. The history itself may be correctly understood, independently of any aid afforded by the other books; but what

would these others be to us, without the key afforded by the history? This difference is not fortuitous or arbitrary, but arises from the peculiar relation which the history sustains to all the other elements involved in the structure of the sacred volume. If the history has been correctly represented as the basis upon which the other parts are built, the frame in which they are inserted, or the thread on which they are strung, the relation indicated by these figures necessarily implies, that the historical Scriptures are more absolutely necessary to the correct interpretation of the others, than the others are to it. This might be easily exemplified and proved by showing how the incidents of David's life illustrate, and in some cases render intelligible, some of his most interesting compositions; and in like manner, how obscure the writings of Paul would be, without some knowledge of his personal history. And yet the converse of this proposition is not true, at least in any similar proportion; for, although the writings of these holy men, in many cases, strikingly illustrate their biography, it can hardly be said that they are ever needed to give that biography a sense or meaning. And apart from these particular examples, the main fact alleged is easily deducible from the very definition or idea of all history, as the science of events or actual occurrences, which from their nature and the constitution of our minds, must serve as the basis, or at least define the area and sphere, of our more profound and abstruse speculations.

Both from their absolute intrinsic value, then, as a substantive and prominent ingredient in the composition of the Bible, and from their relative importance and necessity as keys to the true meaning of its other contents, the historical Scriptures are entitled to a very different treatment, both in kind and in degree, from that which many are content to give them. It is not, however, from too low an estimate of their importance, either absolute or relative, that this practical abuse of them invariably springs. It often arises from an equally erroneous, but entirely distinct impression, that this part of Scripture, though its value and authority cannot be denied, happily calls for very little exegetical research or labour, being so extremely simple, that the youngest child can comprehend it without effort. This illusion, founded on the fact, that the difficulties,

which present themselves in this part of Scripture, are, for the most part, different in kind from those which occur elsewhere, has had a powerful effect in giving currency to shallow views and superficial modes of study, with respect to the whole subject. It is not too much, perhaps, to say, that some of the crudest speculations in theology are ultimately traceable to this false notion of the Sacred History. Because it presents fewer philological puzzles, fewer vexed questions of grammatical construction, fewer doubts as to the primary import of detached words and phrases, or as to the general subject and connection in extended contexts, than are constantly arising in the poetical, prophetic, or doctrinal divisions of the sacred volume, it is hastily inferred that all is absolutely easy, and that he who runs may read and understand, without a pause and almost without a glance at what is written. This habit of ignoring all perplexities and doubts that are not bound up in knotty points of grammar and philology, has led not only to the false views previously mentioned, as to the comparative importance of the Sacred History, but also to shallow and contracted views of it, in cases where its value remains undisputed. It has led to the extremes of being satisfied with vague and inexact impressions of the history as a whole, without any correct knowledge of details, and to the opposite extreme of studying these details minutely, but apart from one another, and without the least conception of the grand whole which they constitute. These modes of studying the Sacred History, though altogether different in principle and spirit, and familiar to the practice of entirely different classes, may be equally fatal to sound knowledge and correct conclusions. The practical evil, from whatever source or sources it may flow, is one that imperatively calls for a corrective. In attempting to discover or suggest such a corrective, let us set out with just views of the necessary difference between the Sacred History and every other, not only with respect to its authority and source, but also with respect to the way in which we are to learn and teach it. No one has ever yet succeeded in applying the same mode of treatment to an inspired and an uninspired history. All such attempts have been either the effect or the cause of skeptical misgivings as to this essential difference. In a history, which we own to be inspired,

we have nothing to do but to interpret and illustrate. The very form of the narration is determined by infallible authority. In other cases the task of the historian is far more extensive. His materials are to be collected, perhaps from various quarters, sifted, arranged, combined, reduced to shape according to his own discretion. In the Sacred History, his labour and his liberty are both restricted, for his office is entirely exegetical. It follows from this obvious and necessary difference between the two great divisions of Church History, which may be conveniently, though arbitrarily, distinguished by the terms "Ecclesiastical" and "Biblical," that, while they are indissolubly joined together, as integral parts of one harmonious whole, they not only may, but must, be handled in a manner utterly dissimilar; the one requiring for its just exhibition a more free, discursive method, while the other admits only of interpretation, in the wide and comprehensive sense of the expression. It also follows, from the premises established or assumed above, that the investigation of the Sacred History, being an exegetical process, must proceed upon exegetical principles and by means of exegetical methods, including minute study of details, both in themselves and in their proximate connections, as distinguished from indefinite and wholesale generalities.

But it does not follow from these premises, as some seem to imagine, that the microscopical inspection of minute details, however diligent or accurate, is all that is required in order to a just appreciation or a truthful exhibition of the Sacred History. The very habit of detailed investigation, which is thus regarded as the only necessary means to the attainment of the end proposed, may operate itself as a preventive, by confining the attention to detached points, without ever rising to more comprehensive views, without ever looking from the single links to the immense chain which they constitute, or ascending from particular events to the great periods, of which they are the characteristic features, much less to the grand organic whole, of which they are component atoms. However this one-sided method of investigation may disguise itself as faithful and laborious search for truth, it cannot be exonerated from the charge of an empirical contempt for that which gives its favourite details their value, namely, their relation to a great scheme or

cycle of events, all tending to one grand result, and to the fulfilment of one grand design.

If these be the two opposite but coexistent errors which, in our day, prevent or vitiate the study of the Sacred History, any corrective to be efficacious, must afford an antidote to both alike. The defect of large and comprehensive views requires to be supplied no less than that of accurate attention to details. There is a sense, indeed, in which the former reformation may be said to be still more necessary than the latter. Although both are desirable, and even necessary to complete success, yet, if only one should be attainable, the preference is due to large views of the whole scope of the history, because such views facilitate the acquisition of minuter knowledge, and in some degree supply its place when wanting; whereas, it is a lesson of experience that exclusive study of minutiae has no such tendency, except in minds of a peculiar constitution, to evolve correct views of a general kind. Such views serve at least to delineate the outlines which may afterwards be filled up with minuter parts; but no accumulation of such facts at random, or in insulated items, has a tendency to generate the frame-work under which they ought to be arranged. On these grounds, chiefly, it is thought best to begin with an attempt to rectify the error of regarding the historical Scriptures as a desultory catalogue of separate events or facts, without a bond of union, or a common relation to a common centre.

This attempt may be facilitated by observing, that the error to be rectified exists in reference, not only to the minute facts which constitute the history, but also to the books in which they are recorded. While some are undoubtedly too much disposed to rob the sacred histories of their individuality, and treat them as a single composition, there is also an opposite tendency to view them as a compilation of detached and independent narratives, without original connection or inherent unity of plan and purpose. To counteract the influence of both these errors, it is necessary to acquire the habit of surveying the whole field, not only from a point of sufficient elevation to command its entire surface, but from several such points, sufficiently distinct and distant to ensure a view of all the phases and distinguishable aspects, which are necessary to



a full and clear impression of the object. Of the many aspects which might be presented in the case before us, three may be selected as peculiarly significant and specially adapted to the end proposed. In the first place, we may look at the whole history as one, without regard to the writers by whom, or the books in which, it is recorded. Or again, we may invert this process so far as to make the several histories, as such, specific objects of attention, with their characteristic singularities of form and substance, yet without losing sight of their organic unity, as parts of one great historical epos. Intermediate between these two phases is a third, in which the prominent figures are those of individuals, the salient points being now neither purely historical, nor, so to speak, bibliographical, but personal or biographical.

In order to a clear view of the field before us, we need not only points from which, but also points at which, to direct our observations. Without such salient points to fix and at the same time to divide our vision, however wide the view presented, it would necessarily be confused and vague. Our first business, therefore, is to look around for landmarks, limits, or dividing lines. Under the second and third aspects of the history above presented, these conveniences are furnished by the very nature of the plan proposed, in one case, by the books, as such considered; in the other, by the *dramatis personæ*, the leading actors in the history itself. Under the first view, which has been distinguished as the purely historical, there must be some analogous advantage, or the view will either be impossible or fail of its effects. This alternative can be avoided, and the necessary aid secured in one way only; by observing the successive variations of the object, to which the history relates, about which it revolves. What is this object in the Sacred History, as such considered?

The history, which occupies so large a space in the inspired word, is not a general history of mankind, for which a space immeasurably larger would have been required; nor is it a mere secular and civil history of the Jews or Hebrews. That race or nation is indeed more prominent than any other, but only on account of its peculiar character and marked position as the chosen people of Jehovah, the depositary of the only true

religion and pure worship for a course of ages; in a word, the ancient CHURCH, at once the preparation and the basis for the Christian Church, which differs from it only in its clearer revelation, in its actual possession of the promised Saviour and the promised Spirit, and in its consequent emancipation from local and ceremonial restrictions. To this temporary, yet divinely constituted body, the most ancient version of the Hebrew Scriptures had accustomed the Hellenistic Jews who used it, to apply the very term (*ἐκκλησία*) which was afterwards employed to designate the Christian organization. As suggestive, both by etymology and usage, of a society called out and separated from the world, and called together in a new and holy brotherhood, it was no less descriptive of the elder than the younger, of the Jewish than the Christian Church. It is the varying condition of this ancient spiritual corporation, under both its forms, that furnishes the necessary landmarks and divisions, in the vast and otherwise bewildering expanse of Biblical or Sacred History. By watching the vicissitudes of this church or chosen people, and drawing lines of demarcation only where these changes are distinctly visible, not only to a close inspection, but afar off and upon the surface of the narrative, we gain a system of division at once natural and rational, entirely independent of all artificial figments or ephemeral caprices, and as easy to remember as to understand, because wholly inseparable in the memory from the salient features of the history itself. In attempting to apply this simple method, it will be convenient to descend from generals to particulars, first fixing the great primary divisions growing out of the internal relations of the subject, and then, by an analogous but secondary process, the minor subdivisions, into which these naturally fall, without the use or the necessity of mere conventional and arbitrary distribution.

Looking abroad, then, over the whole field of Sacred History, as one unbroken narrative, without regard to the diversity of books or writers, let us consider what great critical conjuncture, what eventful change in the condition of the Church or of the world, may be employed as a primary dividing line, cutting the whole field into two great parts. To this inquiry there can be but one correct or satisfying answer. The great turning

point, not merely in sacred but in universal history, its chronological and moral centre, to which all other events must be referred, and by which their significance must be determined, is the Advent of Christ, the Incarnation of the Son of God. The revolutionary change which it produced, not only in the Jewish Church and State, but in the whole condition of the world, is so distinctly marked and legible in every thing around us, that we cannot imagine a more obvious and natural division of the subject into two great parts, than that which is afforded by this grand event. Such a division is the more convenient for our present purpose, because universally familiar and coincident with what has now for ages been the customary method of determining the dates of history. Apart from the intrinsic dignity and value of the primary epoch thus assumed, it is a practical advantage of great moment, to be able to set out from one already so conspicuous and well known, and requiring no laborious calculations to reduce it to the ordinary methods of computing time. It is a vast advantage, that the primary division of our subject should be one which brings it into close and intimate relation to the other parts of history, instead of being insulated from them, as belonging to some other world, and interesting only to some other race.

Having fixed our eye upon the point through which the first great line of demarcation shall be drawn, let us now look, for a moment, at the two great portions into which that line divides the Sacred History. Unequal as they are, when chronologically measured—the proportion being scarcely that of one to fifty—this immense disparity is rectified at once by a consideration of the mutual historical relation between these two periods. When we consider that the three-and-thirty years of our Saviour's presence upon earth—we might almost say, the three years of his public ministry—have been permitted by the Holy Ghost to fill as large a space in the inspired record as whole centuries and ages of an earlier date, we need not hesitate to draw our lines of distribution on the same safe principle, and give to the Evangelical and Apostolical History a place in some degree commensurate, not only with their absolute importance, but with their relative position with respect to the preparatory dispensation. Taking this dis-

tinctly into the account, we shall perceive both practical convenience and historical exactness in the primary division of the whole Sacred History into two parts, corresponding to the two great books of the inspired record, which are commonly distinguished as the Old and New Testament. Between these inseparable yet distinct fields of historical inquiry stands the august person of our Lord himself, to whom all things in the first of these great periods pointed by anticipation, as the end for which they had a being—to whom all things in the second still point backwards, as the starting point from which their course began, and from which their progress is to be for ever measured.

Of these two periods let us leave the second, for the present, out of view, and concentrate our attention on the first, extending in its wide sweep, from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ. Applying the same principle of distribution as before, we may inquire again for some great juncture, some critical change in the condition of the ancient Church, on which to found a subdivision of the Old Testament History. Whatever momentary hesitation might arise in some minds, on a first and superficial view of this immense field, more deliberate inspection and consideration can leave little doubt as to the secondary line of demarcation. The most striking contrast here presented in the visible condition of the chosen people, as a Church or spiritual corporation, is unquestionably that between the freedom and comparative simplicity of patriarchal institutions, and the onerous restrictions of the complicated ceremonial system introduced by Moses.

The two periods resulting from this subdivision may be variously designated. One method of describing them is by the use of the distinctive epithets, "Patriarchal" and "Mosaic." But as these may be conveniently applied to more restricted periods, it is better to use other terms not thus appropriated, in application to the two great parts of the Old Testament History. This it has been proposed to do by calling one the period of "Theophany," the other the period of "Theocracy." The kindred terms thus placed in antithesis to one another, are supposed to be descriptive of two grand peculiarities in the condition of the chosen people during these two periods. In either

case, they sustained an intimate relation to Jehovah as their covenant God; but this relation was externally manifested under very different forms in the two cases. Under the earlier or patriarchal dispensation, the communication between God and man was kept up by divine appearances in human or angelic form, of which the Greek name is Theophany, (*Θεοφάνεια*.) Under the later, or Mosaic dispensation, the chosen race had been matured into a people, and organized as a State, of which Jehovah was the head, not a mere providential ruler, as he is of other nations, but a special and immediate sovereign, corresponding to the human head of other systems, the sovereign people in a pure Democracy, the select few in an Aristocracy, the sole chief in a Monarchy or Autocracy; in strict analogy to which terms, the Mosaic State has been distinguished, since Josephus, by the name of a Theocracy, (*Θεοκρατία*.) These terms, if not too rigidly expounded, so as to confine all theophanic revelation to the earlier period, and all theocratic organization to the later, but used merely to present these as the prominent characteristics of the two conditions, are convenient and expressive designations of the periods in question, that of Theophany concluding, that of the Theocracy commencing, at the same point, namely, the Mosaic Legislation.

Pursuing the same method which has thus far been adopted, descending from generals to particulars, first dividing and then subdividing, and adhering still to the principles of letting the history arrange itself, to the exclusion of all fanciful and arbitrary methods, let us look successively at each of the great subdivisions just obtained, in order, first, to gain a just view of their character and aspect; and secondly, to subdivide them in their turn. Beginning with the period to which the name Theophany has been assigned, we find the whole of it pervaded by the thing which this name was intended to express. That is to say, we find the immediate divine communications, accompanied by visible appearances, continued from Adam to Moses, with little interruption beyond that arising from the silence of the history itself, as to the greater part of the long sojourn in the land of Egypt. But as we trace this long chain of theophanies, we come to a perceptible change in the structure or connection of the links which form it. This change consists in

the somewhat sudden limitation of the theophanic honours to a single family, within which they are afterwards confined until they give place to the permanent theophany embodied in the theocratic institutions. The particular epoch or event associated with this change, is the calling of Abraham, the segregation of a single person, even from the race of Shem, to be the founder of a new house, and at last, of a new nation, with which the Church was to be not united merely, but identified, for many ages. In the whole extent of the primeval history, from Adam to Moses, there is no such salient point, or line of demarcation, as the one afforded by the calling of Abraham to be, in a peculiar sense, the Friend of God and the Father of the Faithful.

If we now turn from the Theophanic to the Theocratic period, in search of some analogous division, we may find it by observing, what indeed is spread upon the surface of the history, that from the time of the Mosaic legislation there is nothing more than a remote approximation to the full development of that extraordinary system, till we reach the reign of David, when it seems to unfold itself completely, as a matter of experience and practice, for the first and last time, since the reign of David is succeeded by a process of national decline, almost unbroken, till the birth of Christ. This upward and then downward movement, so distinctly marked in the whole drift and current of the history itself, that it only needs to be suggested to awaken the attention even of the superficial reader, marks the reign of David as the culminating period of the whole theocracy, the highest ground that Israel attained while subject to the legal dispensation, and therefore an appropriate dividing line in the protracted interval from Moses to Christ.

In this way we obtain four great divisions of the history contained in the Old Testament; not conventional or fanciful divisions, but spontaneously arising from the natural relations of the subject, and associated with the three great salient points or critical conjunctures, the Call of Abraham, the Law of Moses, and the Reign of David.

By a further application of precisely the same method, each of these four parts may be subjected to a similar division, founded exclusively on changes and diversities in the condition

of the chosen people or the human race. Thus in the period which precedes the call of Abraham, two such vicissitudes and contrasts are discernible, as strongly marked as any in all history. The first is the Fall, the most momentous of all revolutions, connecting the opposite extremes of man's condition by one brief and almost instantaneous occurrence. The other is the Flood, the link between the old world and the new, producing changes almost as complete as would have followed from a fresh creation. In both these cases there are great material revolutions, but produced by moral causes.

In the second of these four great intervals, viz. the one from Abraham to Moses, an obvious line of demarcation is afforded by the migration of the chosen people into Egypt, with the accompanying change in their condition from that of a growing but not overgrown nomadic family, wandering at pleasure through the land of promise, to that of a rapidly increasing nation, settled in a fertile province of a foreign land, without political power or even independence, but with every physical advantage to promote their rapid growth and their acquaintance with the useful arts. Even within the period of this Egyptian residence, a fainter but discernible distinction may be traced between the state of Israel whilst favoured by the Pharaohs, and exempt from every danger except that of amalgamation and absorption in the hospitable nation which protected them, and their condition after the king arose "who knew not Joseph," and exchanged the policy of patronage for that of persecution. This change is as real, although not so clear a line of demarcation between Joseph and Moses, as the migration into Egypt is itself between Moses and Abraham. Still more striking is the next transition, from the bondage and the cruelties of Egypt to the freedom of the wilderness, the line of demarcation coinciding with the Exodus or actual departure of the people out of Egypt. The great covenant transaction at Mount Sinai perfects the transition from a slavish dependence upon human power, to a theocratical dependence upon God. The second period, and the first great primary division, are wound up by the Mosaic legislation, the inauguration of the system under which the chosen people was to live, through every other change and revolution, till the birth of Christ.

Between these distant points of time, however, there is, as we have seen before, a kind of water-shed, or central height, to which the system travels up from Moses and then down to the Messiah. This is the reign of David, between which and the Mosaic legislation, there may still be traced upon the surface of the history distinguishable boundaries, or limits, marking off distinct conditions of the chosen people. Such, for instance, is the Mission of the Spies from Kadesh, and the consequent refusal of the people to go up and take possession of the land. Beyond that fatal limit lies the Mysterious Error in the Wilderness, to the elder race a condign punishment of exquisite severity, but to their sons a wise and merciful provision for their gradual deliverance from parental influence, and for their moral education under the direct control of Moses, or, to speak more properly, of God himself. The condition of the people during these memorable forty years, has no analogy in earlier or later history, and may, therefore, properly be made the basis of a distinct period.

The next dividing line is that presented by the Conquest of the Promised Land, begun by Moses and continued under his successor, Joshua, the son of Nun, with the efficient aid of the contemporary race, whose frequently commended faithfulness and zeal may, no doubt, be ascribed in a great measure to their training in the wilderness, already mentioned. The culpable remissness of the next generation, in waging an exterminating war against the Canaanites, imparts a very different character and aspect to the period of the Judges, during which the people were again and again judicially abandoned to the very enemies whom they had, with a false compassion, spared, and to a multitude of others like them, who continued to oppress them until they repented and returned to God, who then restored them by the agency of military chieftains, or dictators, known in history as Judges. Though the social evils of this period have by some been most unduly magnified, the whole condition of the people was peculiar, and entitles this part of the history to separate consideration.

Towards the close of this long and eventful period, a premonition of some new change is afforded by the gradual translation of the dictatorial or judicial power from the hands of mili-



tary chiefs to those of civil and religious rulers, such as Eli the High Priest and the Prophet Samuel. The change, for which the way was thus prepared, is that from martial law and loose confederation to a settled monarchy, as if to show that no form of government was either indispensably necessary or essentially repugnant to the end for which the theocracy existed. Though the people were reprov'd for asking this change in the way and at the time they did, the change had been predicted, even to the Patriarchs, and prospectively provided for in the Law of Moses, as one of the most notable transitions in the history, and as such introducing a new period, that of the Undivided Monarchy.

Of the three reigns comprehended under this description, each has a most distinct and marked physiognomy or aspect of its own, and may therefore be considered by itself. The reign of Saul, though divinely sanctioned for a special purpose, is not to be reckoned as a theocratical administration. It was rather an experimental reign, designed to teach the people by experience the true character of such a kingdom as they had desired. To this end Saul was chosen, and surrounded with all possible advantages of a personal, political, and social nature. He was even clothed, in some mysterious manner, with a spiritual influence, and distinguished by great providential favours. But being wholly destitute of a true theocratic spirit, or devotion to God's service in the very way of God's appointment, he was soon at variance with Samuel, who crowned him; with David, who was to succeed him; with his own better judgment and right feelings; and at last, or rather from the first, with God himself, until from bad to worse he became desperate, was cast off, and perished without hope upon the field of battle. These particulars are mentioned to evince that Saul's reign is unique enough to constitute a chapter by itself, having no chronological position of its own, but being interjected as a kind of episode between the reign of David and the judgeship of Samuel, which meet and even overlap each other.

The next step brings us to that high ground towards which the theocracy has slowly been ascending since the giving of the law at Sinai, or at least since the possession of the promised land. There was only an approximation to the full realization

of the system till the reign of David, whose success both as a ruler and a conqueror, his religious zeal and lyric inspiration, but, above all, his implicit and unwavering devotion to the spirit and the form of the theocracy, conspired to place him on its highest elevation, as at once the greatest of the theocratic sovereigns, and the most honoured type of the Messiah. Hence he is far more frequently referred to in the later Hebrew Scriptures, and in those of the New Testament, than any, or than all of his successors, the best of whom are but faint copies of his virtues, and their reigns his own reign lengthened out, as if to fill the interval remaining until Christ should come. Even the powerful and brilliant reign of Solomon belongs to the period of decline, and not to that of culmination, as its splendour and prosperity were rather the reward of David's labours, than the fruits of his own wisdom, and his reign, imposing as it was, contained within itself the seeds of dissolution, as appeared from the defections of the king himself, and from the germination of those hostile powers by which his son was to be overwhelmed. Even this faint outline of the three reigns comprehended in the Undivided Monarchy may serve to show that no equal periods of history are more distinctly marked by countenance and features of their own.

Taking our stand upon the lofty table-land of David's reign, with that of Saul immediately below us upon one hand, and that of Solomon upon the other, let us turn our back upon the former, and look forward far beyond the latter, towards the distant point at which Messiah is to show himself. Between these still remote bounds let us again inquire what dividing lines may be distinctly traced upon the surface of the history itself, 'without resorting to mechanical contrivances or fanciful inventions. If we still adhere to the original prescription, to be governed by the changes in the actual condition of the chosen people, the most striking contrast that presents itself is that upon the opposite sides of the Babylonian Conquest. The two conditions separated by this line are that of independent nationality before it, and that of foreign domination after it. From David to Josiah, the theocracy, however rent or humbled, still maintained its position as an independent State. From that time onward, with a single brief exception, to be

more distinctly mentioned afterwards, the state, with which the ancient Church had been identified, was subjected to a series of heathen masters. This is the first great subdivision of the interval from David to the Advent. Looking again at this great subdivision by itself, we find a line drawn at the time of the Assyrian Conquest and the downfall of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Up to that event the history presents us either with an undivided monarchy, as under Solomon and David, or with the same body politic divided into rival kingdoms, but together forming the same aggregate as ever. After the date of the Assyrian Conquest, ten of the twelve tribes disappear from history. Judah now occupies the place of Israel, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jacob and of the divine plan, formed and entertained from the beginning, but deferred in execution to allow the chosen tribe the same time and facilities for growing into a great nation, that all Israel enjoyed of old in Egypt. Individual members of the other tribes were not excluded from communion and incorporation with the tribe of Judah. The half, if not the whole, of Benjamin, had all along adhered to it, and Levi, as the sacerdotal tribe, had always been attached to the theocracy. But the theocracy itself, considered as a national organization, was henceforth seated in that tribe, from which the dying Jacob had predicted that the sceptre never should depart till Shiloh came. From David to the Babylonish Conquest, then, the three successive phases, which the history of Israel exhibits, are those of the Undivided Kingdom, the Divided Kingdom, and the Residuary Kingdom.

There still remains to be surveyed for the purpose of division, the last melancholy period of foreign domination, reaching from the death of Josiah in reality, but nominally from the last of his successors, to the Advent. Here the dividing lines are too distinctly marked to be mistaken, being drawn upon the history not of Israel only but of the known world. The changes here are not internal and domestic only, but the changes of great empires, under each of which successively the Jews passed into bondage. The critical junctures, in this portion of their history, coincide with the great revolutions of the age, and in order to distinguish the fluctuations of their own condition, we have only to enumerate the powers that succeeded one another

in a transient but supreme dominion, during the five centuries immediately preceding the nativity of Christ. The history of Israel during these five hundred years is really the history of their subjection to the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Egyptian, Syrian, Hasmonean, Roman, and Idumean domination. Of these names all but two are names of alien heathen powers. The first exception is the sixth, the Hasmonean, an indigenous or native dynasty, created by the Syrian persecutions, and for several generations true to its devout and patriotic origin, but afterwards degenerate and the betrayer of the country to the Romans. The other is the eighth and last, the Edomite or Idumean, a mixed race sprung from the incorporation of the sons of Esau with the sons of Jacob by the Hasmonean conqueror, John Hyrcanus. Out of this race sprang the Herods, the most hated instruments and tools of Roman domination. Whether these names be omitted or inserted in the catalogue, it sets before us a true picture of the last scene in this interesting drama—the salient points and several phases of the closing period in the Old Testament history. For such it is, if we suppose this to extend to the commencement of the New, although, in fact, we are forsaken by inspired authorities long before we reach the end of the Persian domination. But precisely where we are thus thrown upon uninspired authorities, the value of these uninspired authorities begins to be enhanced, not only by the silence of the Scriptures, but by their own intrinsic merit. By a sort of providential compensation, when the guiding hand of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah is withdrawn, we are permitted to embrace that of Herodotus and Xenophon.

In this rapid and jejune enumeration of the periods into which the Sacred History divides itself, it will be seen that we have treated it throughout as one unbroken narrative, without regard to the precise form of the record, or its frequent changes. This we have intentionally done, in order to present in bold relief the unity and continuity of the history as a whole, and, at the same time, the indefinite variety by which its several portions are characterized. It may also be observed, that the proposed arrangement is entirely independent of minute chronology, and cannot be affected, in its outline at least, by disputed questions as to dates and epochs. This is the more

worthy of attention, because many are accustomed to confound chronology and history, the science of dates and the science of events; the first of which derives its value wholly from the second, which, on the contrary, might still exist without a change of its intrinsic value, if all specific dates should be disputed or forgotten. The striking sentiment of Bossuet, that the error universally acknowledged in the vulgar era, has had no effect upon the truth of history, nor even on the clearness of men's views respecting it, admits of a much wider application. A large proportion of the common chronological disputes are mere puzzles in arithmetic, without effect as bearing on the great events of history, their consequence, or their mutual relations. Except where it affects these, or is necessary to remove apparent inconsistencies, this branch of mathematics may be safely left to those whose taste or business leads them to pursue it. Least of all should any be discouraged from historical pursuits by an infirmity of memory in reference to minor dates, or other chronological minutiae. Such information is desirable, and ought to be acquired, when the acquisition is not made at the expense of more important knowledge; but it cannot be too strongly recommended to the student of the Sacred History to store the memory with those great features and relations of the subject which are least dependent upon calculation.

We have now presented, in its outlines, one of the three aspects under which we proposed to view the Old Testament History. This is the one before distinguished as the purely historical, because the salient points and the divisions of the subject are derived exclusively from critical conjunctures and eventful changes, in the condition of the ancient Church or chosen people, as an aggregate body. There are still two other views which we intended to present; the Biographical, in which the salient points are individuals, the types and representatives of their respective ages; and the Bibliographical, in which the distribution of the history is founded on the several books in which it is recorded, and due regard paid to the physiognomy and character of these, as independent compositions. But we feel that the draught upon our readers' patience is already great enough, and therefore must reserve the rest of

what we had to offer for another time and place. Our end, for the present, will be answered, if we shall have furnished, even to a few congenial readers, the suggestion of a plan, however simple, by which the elementary minutiae of the history, instead of being thrown aside or slighted, may acquire a legitimate, though adventitious interest, as subjects of detailed investigation, and a firmer hold upon the student's memory.

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*Charles Hodge*

- ART. V.—1. *Denominational Education.* By the Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge. Published originally in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*. Philadelphia: Printed by C. Sherman. 1854. Pp. 24.
2. *Letter to the Governor of South Carolina.* By the Rev. Dr. Thornwell.
3. *The Thirty-Third and Thirty-Fourth Reports of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church.* Philadelphia: 1852 and 1853.
4. *Right of the Bible in our Public Schools.* By George B. Cheever, D. D. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1854. Pp. 303.
5. *The Position of Christianity in the United States, in its Relations with our Political Institutions, and especially with reference to Religious Instruction in our Public Schools.* By Stephen Colwell. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co. 1854. Pp. 175.

THESE publications are evidence of the strong and widely diffused interest taken in the subject of Popular Education. They evince also, as we think, that in the midst of apparently conflicting principles, there is a substantial agreement among religious men, as to the most essential points involved in the discussion. We are well aware that the difference between the religious community and those who, in many instances, control the action of our legislative bodies in relation to this subject, is radical and irreconcilable. We are sorry to be obliged to add, that many religious men, from different motives, have been led to throw their influence in favour of this latter party, who advocate the exclusion of religious instruction from our public schools. The religious community, however, as a body, we